DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 229 855 EA 015 638

AUTHOR Levin, Henry M., Ed.
TITLE Running the Local Gauntlet: Fresh Insights to District Problems. [and] Reclaiming Urban Schools: A Modest Proposal. IFG Policy Perspectives, Winter 1983.
INSTITUTION Stanford Univ., Calif. Inst. for Research on Educational Finance and Governance.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 13p.
AVAILABLE FROM Publications, Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance, School of Education, CERAS Building, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305-1691.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Information Analyses (070)
JOURNAL CIT IFG Policy Notes; v4 n1 Win 1983

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Change Strategies; Court Role; Curriculum Development; Discipline Policy; Dropout Prevention; Dropout Programs; Educational Change; *Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; Finance Reform; *School Districts; State School District Relationship; Urban Schools

ABSTRACT

This collection of short articles, devoted to educational reform at the local level, addresses the issues of improving curricula, expanding educational resources, addressing dropout and discipline problems, and handling increased court involvement in school reform. "The Sceptre, the Rod and the Schoolhouse Gate," by Lawrence Friedman, traces the history of court decisions on student rights. Michael Kirst, in "Cracking Down on Curriculum," reports on the status of curriculum reform and provides questions for local policy-makers to test the adequacy of their curricula. In "Court Ordered Reform: Too Much of a Good Thing?," Donald N. Jensen focuses on the lengthy federal courts' supervision of Boston public schools and draws lessons for local school administrators. Joan O'Brien helps local decision-makers find the cost consequences and service implications of alternative budget strategies in "Two New Budget Blueprints." Russell W. Rumberger's "Diagnosing Dropouts" cites successful programs that help potential or past dropouts finish school. Finally, in "Reclaiming Urban Schools," Henry Levin locates the greatest challenges for urban school policy-makers and outlines strategies to provide political support, resources, and effective planning for public schools in large cities. (JW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED229855

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

RUNNING THE LOCAL GAUNTLET

Fresh Insights to District Problems

Elementary and secondary schools are the constitutional responsibility of the states. The laws governing their operations are set out by state legislatures and administered by state departments of education. The states are largely responsible for funding education at all levels. In the last two decades the federal presence has also become important through the funding of special programs such as those for disadvantaged, bilingual, and handicapped students, and through the application of federal laws in areas of educational discrimination by race and gender. As debates rage about the state and federal roles in education, too often it is forgotten that local educational agencies must actually operate schools and implement educational policies.

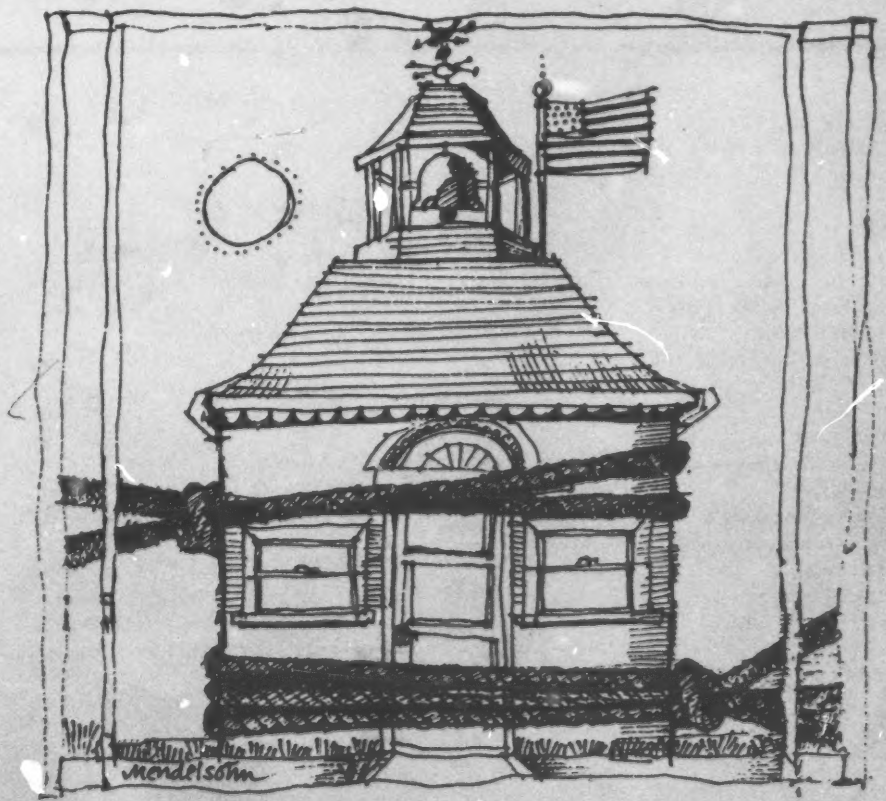
Yet, if the states and federal government are beset with concerns about education, consider the dilemmas facing local school districts. Declining enrollments have placed great pressures on schools to reduce staff and to seek other economies. Massive immigrations from Asia and Latin America have created strong demands for bilingual instruction and other programs to assist such students in joining the American mainstream. Committments to disadvantaged and handicapped children place severe strains on existing school resources.

There are calls for more rigorous curricula, greater attention to basic skills, and the adoption of minimum competency requirements for diplomas. At the same time job markets are shifting in directions that have uncertain implications for education. High school dropout rates have reversed an historical trend and are on the rise; the discretionary power of local school authorities has become increasingly restricted by a growing body of laws and court decisions that mandate particular programs and limit school practices.

At the same time, funds for education have not kept pace with inflation and the necessary costs for meeting legal mandates. Tax and expenditure limitation movements at the state level and budgetary deficits at the federal level have severely curtailed the funds available to local schools.

Thus the local schools are caught in a double bind: Pressures have increased for accommodating new demands and providing accountability to a wide range of constituencies while the resource base for doing so is shrinking. As one local school administrator said: "How do you lift yourself up by your own bootstraps when you don't have boots?"

This issue of *Policy Notes* addresses a number of pressing concerns at the local level that should be of interest to school board members, local administrators, teachers, students, and parents as well as local citizens. Obviously, no single prescription will be adequate for the vastly different situations faced by some 15,000 local educational agencies. However, we have incorporated in the articles suggestions derived from IFG research for improving curricula, expanding educational resources, addressing dropout problems, and other such challenges. ■



EA 015 638, Part 1.

The Sceptre, the Rod & the Schoolhouse Gate

In 1859, Tennessee schoolteacher James Anderson was drilling his class when young Wyatt Layne spoke softly out of turn. Anderson kept the boy after class, and then gave him a whipping: "He hit him about a dozen licks with a switch . . . struck him pretty hard, Layne crying all the time."

Anderson was convicted of assault and battery in the trial court; the Supreme Court of Tennessee affirmed the decision. Young Wyatt's offense has been "slight and entirely unintentional." In its decision, the court recognized that a teacher may use the rod but not "wantonly and without cause." A teacher has discretion, continued the court, but it must not be abused. "The government of the school should be patriarchal rather than despotic. If it be a monarchy, it should be a limited one, and not absolute."

One of the roles of the courts in the educational system is to provide, on behalf of students, limits to teacher and school board power. Suits by or on behalf of public school students sometimes challenge rules or practices of local school boards, principals or teachers. The courts have established definitions of what school is, or ought to be, and have contributed to defining the balance of responsibility between schools and parents in controlling the behavior of young people. More importantly, over time the courts have guaranteed students certain fundamental constitutional rights.

19th Century Prologue

Student rights cases in the 19th century usually had little to do with the rights of students as such; most of them were minors, and their parents prosecuted the suits. In one small group of cases, the issue was whether or not a child had the right to attend some particular school. There were also cases about expulsion.

Schools rarely, if ever, have barred students merely on a whim. Usually, some issue of student conduct lurked in the background, and the courts were asked to determine the limits of the school's authority. For instance, in 1893, a Massachusetts student was excluded from school because he was said to be weak-minded and troublesome to other children, made uncouth noises, pinched others, and could not "take ordinary decent physical care of himself." In another case, a girl was excluded from school because she was "immoral," and "pursued a course of open and notorious familiarities, and actual illicit intercourse, and that for hire and reward." In still another case, the court allowed the suspension of a 14-year-old who refused to turn in a pupil who defaced the building with obscenities.

Courts did not question the right of schoolteachers to take a switch to their pupils. The teacher — and the school board — stood "in loco parentis." The right of parents to punish their children physically was clear. The question was how far teachers, during the school day, filled the parents' shoes. The parents had a general right to chastise; the teacher's right was more restricted. Over-punishing pupils was treated as an offense. A court convicted one Indiana teacher who whipped, punched and kicked a student in the head for misspelling the word "commerce," and refusing to try again.

The question was how far teachers, during the school day, filled the parents' shoes.

The limits of parental authority were also subject to court review. Parents opposed to vaccination on religious grounds often brought suit against schools requiring them for admission. Courts generally sided with schools in these cases.

Thus religion was sometimes an area of conflict between parents and schools. In 1854, 15-year-old Bridget Donahue, a Catholic, was expelled from school for refusing to read the King James version of the Bible. The Maine Supreme Court upheld the board of education and its power to decide which books would be used in the schools. In 1866, a young girl was suspended for refusing to bow her head during Bible readings and prayers, on her father's instructions. The state supreme court placed limitations on parental authority by affirming the school's practice as an "appropriate method" of reminding "both teachers and scholars that one of the chief objects of education . . . is to impress upon the minds of children and youth . . . principles of piety and justice."

Discipline was at the core of the 19th century school system, which aimed to teach a traditional value system, a world view shared by all "right-thinking people." Nothing is said in the literature or by the courts about freedom of speech, or expression, or the dangers of conformity. Conformity, or obedience, was a virtue and democracy depended, not on the wilder excesses of individualism, but on a kind of balanced self-control.

Pupils' Rights in the 20th Century

Student rights cases in the early 20th century continued these themes. The vaccination issue was still significant, but state laws removed the issue from local school boards, and high courts consistently upheld vaccination. In the 1940s and 1950s, the single biggest issue was school rules restricting fraternities, sororities and other student clubs. The treatment of married students in public schools was also important.

Many school districts regularly expelled married students, pregnant students and teenage fathers. Some districts dropped married but pregnant schoolteachers as soon as they started to "show," though the Supreme Court held in 1974 that these rules were unconstitutional. Other schools limited the right of married students to take part in school activities outside of class, and the junior-senior prom was specifically off limits. One married student who wanted to play baseball challenged the rule in federal court and won.

Underlying the rules that were challenged in these cases is a view of public schools as guardians of conventional morality — or at least as places where traditional purity is maintained, even at some risk of unreality. The policy was enunciated by school officials in *Indiana High School Athletic Association v. Raike* (1975). Married students were "bad examples" for other athletes. They might discuss "marital intimacies" and engage in "corrupting locker room talk." Thus the boards tried to foster ideals of chastity and strict morality, obedience and respect for authority — at least officially. A pregnant teacher, like a married student, advertised sexuality too blatantly for these purposes.

This view of the schoolhouse no doubt reflected the wishes of most parents. Traditionally, the schoolhouse had been considered an extension of the home. In the old cases — on vaccination for example — student rights were peripheral. No doubt the students shared their parents' views, but the real conflict was between two zones of discretion, schoolhouse and home.

Judge Not By Looks

Nothing is more startling in the history of student rights litigation than the explo-

sion of dress and hair cases, decided almost entirely after 1966 and peaking in the early 1970s. Unlike the 19th century cases, these cases of the 1960s were about individual rights, personal life style and freedom from authority. They addressed themselves to courts on the basis of fundamental principle. The simple statement in *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* (1969) that students do not "shed their constitutional rights . . . at the schoolhouse gate" was actually a startling shift in doctrine and attitude, and reduced the discretion of teachers and school boards.

In this case, three students, including John Tinker, age 15, and his 13-year-old sister, Mary, were suspended from school for wearing armbands (symbols of opposition to the war in Vietnam) during school hours. The Supreme Court, looking through the lens of constitutional principle, saw the schoolhouse as a very limited monarchy indeed. It declared that students and teachers do not lose their freedom of speech upon entering the school; schools were not "enclaves of totalitarianism." The state may regulate school activity to prevent disorder, but there was no evidence that the armbands caused disturbance. The regulation was unconstitutional.

Tinker raised the question of authority over students as individuals. The power of schools was no longer derivative; parents, after all, can still force their children to take off black armbands, even though children enjoy freedom of speech. *Tinker* also prompted a tremendous number of hair and dress code challenges to school boards, questioning the discretion of teachers and school boards. Win or lose, the cases made their impact on local school boards. Judicial review of rules was clearly a possibility in the case of controversial regulations. Consequently, schools have adjusted their rules — and perhaps their behavior as well.

The result is a shift in the very conception of the school. This shift can be illustrated by the case of a high school principal in 1971 who hung the Confederate battle flag in his office. Black students objected, and the court agreed with them that the flag was a symbol of segregation, of "white racism in general." The constitution forbids all such flags in a "unitary school system where both white and black students attend school together."

Yet, of course, students can fly flags, wear black armbands, whistle or not whistle Dixie, distribute pro-pot or anti-pot literature and sport whatever hair, hats, berets, buttons and badges they wish. The constitution protects their freedom of expression, in and out of school. The courts stand ready to enforce this view of schools.

Thus, the limited monarchy is more limited than ever. In the 19th century, schools were charged with molding young minds, imbuing patriotism, morality and obedience. Pupils were, in a real sense, passive vessels into which education was poured. Today the school is the passive vessel, required to avoid partiality. *Tinker* changed the schoolhouse from an extension of the family into one social institution among many. Like other institutions — hospitals, prisons, business corporations — schools are now subject to general rules of law. School is no longer a parental or loco-parental zone. It was an important social shift to move from thinking about pupils as people whose main job was learning how to obey, to people owning personalities and a bundle of rights. ■

CRACKING DOWN ON CURRICULUM

A creationist trial in Arkansas, the lobbying by business groups to have the free enterprise system taught in Arizona, and protests by California mothers over cutbacks in high school electives caused by the five period day are all examples of an increasing local concern with curricular matters. Most states do not prescribe a detailed common curriculum for high school students, requiring only minimal graduation requirements. This has allowed school boards considerable flexibility in prescribing courses of study, graduation requirements and curricular offerings.

Recently though, some states have taken back local delegation of curriculum policy because of dissatisfaction with standards and test results. Secondary schools rarely have an integrated coherent curricular program for most students. While many schools and districts have adopted goals and objectives, very few of them have designed curricular sequences that specifically address these desired outcomes. Moreover, curricular "reform" cycles often have a short-lived, bandwagon style. Good ideas are thrown out with bad ones at each cyclical turn. For instance, some sound components of post-Sputnick's new math, such as problem solving and teaching about proofs, were jettisoned along with unsuccessful concepts such as set theory.

The secondary school tends to be a collection of classes and teachers, and to a large extent, the courses offered are dependent upon the skills and preferences of the faculty. A subject matter supervisor or department chair rarely considers overall curricular design issues that transcend their subject specialty. State money to improve secondary school curriculum is interpreted and implemented as a series of disjointed mini-projects. Due to such difficulties and a rising concern about standards, states have assumed some control over secondary school curricular matters in spite of reluctance to further restrict local control.

Obstacles to Curricular Reform

These faults are not always to be blamed on the school district. Their curricular discussions consist of staff presentations on specific subject areas, not on how the parts fit together or overall emphases. Competing interest groups and conflicting ideologies apply pressure to educational organizations to structure curriculum according to their own preferences. In addition, there are the structural problems of operating a school — the varied skills and qualifications of the individuals employed there, as well as the students who attend.

Universities can have a powerful impact on high school curriculum if they promulgate a logical and consistent pattern of courses for their own graduates designed to have a cumulative impact on a student's intellectual development. But the consensus around the concept of collegiate general education was shattered in the 1960s, and replaced by a smorgasbord of electives and distribution requirements. Since the university is unfocused and without a common core, the high schools have no curricular standard around which to orient their own curriculum policy.

This problem is exacerbated by minimal university entrance requirements. As the universities provided more remedial work in basic skills, the need to learn academic skills in high school became less urgent. The concept of a common curriculum for the secondary school was clouded by the overlap between university remedial courses, community college duplication of the 11th and 12th grades, and unclear college admissions standards regarding required proficiencies.

Schools have been pressured into de-

veloping instructional courses in drug abuse, sex education, moral education, energy, career education, ethnic studies, parenting, the environment and so on. Rarely do educators or the public ask what is to be excluded from school course offerings when these new subjects are introduced, or where they should be placed in the total pattern of instruction. Curricular issues are also often resolved through capitulating to recurrent and sometimes contrary pressures. For instance, one year's emphasis on back to basics gives way to next year's concern that popular electives need to be reinstated to help prevent dropouts. Although it is imperative that the high school curriculum retain an extensive offering of elective courses to capitalize on student interests, these should be extensions of a core, or general education, curriculum. These elective courses tend to displace such subjects as English and math.

What is actually taught in a specific classroom, regardless of a course title, is dependent upon the skills, interests and preferences of individual teachers. In spite of a common course title, what is actually taught may vary significantly from class to class. Additionally, the quality of instruction varies widely from teacher to teacher. Many teachers do not receive in-service training, even though their initial training occurred more than 15-20 years ago. Furthermore, due to cutbacks in personnel, teachers are often required to teach subjects in which they have little or no training at all. North Carolina estimates that 44 percent of its current physical science teachers have been diverted into science from other fields.

Most discussions about curriculum address only a portion of the problem, such as a single subject (math), teacher evaluation, or graduation standards, with scant attention to overall curricular configuration and structure. Because of limited funds, educational reform in the 1980s should not and cannot add new layers and functions around existing ones. What is needed is a balancing of functions, a realism in claims, and a focus on a core curriculum that schools can actually implement.

A Revitalized Local Role

Many educators and legislators believe that the public interest to insure that students pursue "crucial" curriculum can be better served by state rather than local action. They argue that local school boards are more subject to pressure from special interest groups to add courses unrelated to a core curriculum. An alternative to increased state assumption of curricular policy would be a revitalized local role.

Whether at the state or local level, policymakers must address the question of curriculum coherence and continuity. Before making any curricular changes, local policymakers should understand what students are currently studying and how they arrange those courses to meet graduation requirements. After collecting data on the issues and deliberating on their consequences and adequacy, local policymakers can then move on to the issues addressed by the following questions. Although these questions are not complex, they are rarely asked by school boards or superintendents.

Student Access and Nature of Courses

- What courses and subjects are being offered, particularly in advanced content areas? How and why have course offerings changed over the past five to ten years?
- What are the trends in enrollments for courses by student subgroups over five or ten years? Why has the enrollment increased or decreased in some subjects?
- What courses are required for graduation? Which are recommended? Do these graduation standards reflect a unifying theme?
- What are the criteria for student access to courses? Do students and others know these criteria? What do students see as barriers to taking particular courses?
- When and how do students select or become assigned to courses, sequences, and tracks? Why do they take or not take the courses they do? Why do they take or not take advanced courses?
- What information is provided to students about the relation between courses, college entrance requirements and job skill specifications?
- How consistent is course content across teachers and schools in terms of subject matter studied, number of assignments, and entrance and exit criteria?
- How much do teachers modify their courses to accommodate student characteristics? What are the characteristics that most affect teacher planning?
- Are courses and the skills they impart sequential or coordinated? What is the rationale underlying course coordination or its lack of integration? Do students, teachers and others understand these connections and the continuity in sequences?
- What are screening or entry and exit criteria for determining student mastery of content and access to appropriate instruction? Who decides what courses fit into various tracks?
- What curricular limits are recognized by students? What barriers do students see to obtaining learning assistance and good grades?
- Are remediation, special assistance and lower track courses designed to provide students with skills for more advanced work?

School improvement can no longer rely primarily on costly additions and added functions. After two decades of rapid build-up in categorical grants, instructional specialists and classroom aides, the current decline in federal and state aid, and local fiscal constraints imposed by the recession make core curriculum reform more urgent than ever before. ■

briefly . . .

Local schools are often overlooked when reformers attempt to change the manner in which education is provided. However, at precisely this level, administrators, teachers and parents must integrate day-to-day realities with the mandates of reform. It is to the local school or district level that this issue of *Policy Notes* is addressed. Consulting editor for this issue is Henry M. Levin, director of IFG. Levin also contributed the *Perspective* to this issue which outlines a proposal to rebuild urban schools.

"The Sceptre, the Rod & the Schoolhouse Gate" discusses the changing role of the school in educating and disciplining students. It was written by Lawrence Friedman, Kirkwood Professor of Law at Stanford. Michael Kirst, a professor in the School of Education and past president of the California State School Board, offers concrete suggestions for curricular reform at the local level in "Cracking Down on Curriculum". The expansive tendencies of court involvement in school reform are examined in "Court Ordered Reform: Too Much of a Good Thing?", written by Donald N. Jensen, a research associate at IFG.

"Two New Budget Blueprints" describes two analytical tools developed at IFG. One has already been tested at the district level by Joan O'Brien, the article's author. She is a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Stanford University. The other has been successfully used at the state level and is currently being revised for use by districts. Russell W. Rumberger's work on high school dropouts is excerpted in "Diagnosing Dropouts". Rumberger is a research associate at IFG. The illustration on the first page is the work of Barbara Mendelsohn of Stanford's News and Publications Office. ■

COURT ORDERED REFORM:
Too Much of a Good Thing?

The lawsuit and the courthouse are a part of the daily lives of school administrators. Parents assert their educational preferences as legal "rights". Courts order that a wide array of procedural protections be afforded pupils, and they require school districts to serve — or better serve — large populations of children who had traditionally been underserved by the schools. And, once court action has been initiated, it tends to expand, as judges sometimes seek to change schools in ways unrelated to the original lawsuit.

The ambitious attempt of Judge W. Arthur Garrity to tie desegregation in the Boston schools to educational reform is a good example of this phenomenon. Garrity's 1974 decision, *Morgan v. Kerrigan*, held that the Boston School Committee had practiced unconstitutional segregation in all aspects of its administration of the Boston public schools. The ruling met substantial public opposition, often documented on the pages of newspapers around the country.

Implementing Court Reform

In his sweeping remedial plan for the Boston schools, Judge Garrity linked desegregation with educational reform. He decreed that substantial changes be made in school administration, student assignment, school buildings, and many other areas. He redrew school district boundaries, established a city-wide school district offering unique programs, enlisted the aid of cultural institutions in the area, established parent councils, closed some school facilities and renovated others, organized bilingual education programs, and made many other changes.

Implementation of these reforms, often costing a great deal of money, encountered many obstacles in the ensuing years. Sometimes meeting the court-ordered requirements in Boston for desegregation was difficult — as in the case of hiring black teachers for certain subjects. Many times the changes made were unwanted by parents or other members of the community — as in the case of school closings in several neighborhoods. Population shifts of all types complicated these tasks. And throughout the litigation and implementation efforts, there was little significant change in the educational achievement of Boston's school children.

Judge Garrity relied on two methods of enforcing compliance with his city-wide desegregation plan. Detailed unilateral decrees sought to clarify points about the desegregation plan or to resolve unforeseen crises and problems that were not covered by the plan. Judge Garrity held hearings and made decisions on building usage, student discipline, assignment and transportation. The court employed outside experts to render advice when necessary. Many of these decrees were designed to cope with the exigencies of the administration as they arose, but they often caused dislocations because they were based on faulty or insufficient expectations about what court administration could achieve.

Negotiated relief, in which the affected parties to the suit bargained over its contents, was another method used to enforce compliance. The precedent for such a method was set by Judge Garrity's approach to the development of his city-wide remedy, where all parties before the court had been encouraged to submit desegregation plans and comment on the other plans.

Consequence of Court-Administered Reform

The broad scope of Garrity's involvement in implementing desegregation of Boston's school was largely a consequence of his own expansive notion of what constituted school desegregation. The vagueness of the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause, upon which court intervention was based, allowed Garrity to define desegregation as involving both student assignment and educational reform. As a result, Garrity became intimately involved in school administration: what programs were offered in the Boston schools were just as important to him as which student went where.

Even after a preliminary educational blueprint had been developed, many problems still had to be addressed. Should kindergartens be desegregated? What should be done about the special case of East Boston, which was difficult to desegregate due to geography and population patterns? Every contingency could not be governed by a formal provision in a desegregation plan, so Judge Garrity issued subsequent orders to govern the new problems that arose. This involved him more deeply in school affairs.

For instance, Judge Garrity meticulously outlined the teacher recruitment efforts that the defendants should undertake. The judge also outlined in great detail the procedures that the defendants should follow in identifying the racial composition of the teaching staff, the actual hiring of additional faculty members and the qualifications new teachers must possess.

Many of the new court orders had questionable provisions, such as the judge's exemption of East Boston from desegregation; many orders were impossible to achieve, such as meeting some of the hiring goals Garrity had set for the addition of minority teachers; and some were contradictory, as in the case of Garrity's professed goal of insuring stability in the student assignments while mandating specific student assignment guidelines. Thus, the court did not have to go very far down this road before it had promulgated enough "standards" to permit it to make virtually any decision it desired — that is, to act arbitrarily.

Another reason why the federal court in Boston enlarged the domain of its authority was due to the "tar-baby effect" that takes place when any government agency — not just the courts — seeks to govern the behavior of another enterprise. There is a tendency for the regulating organization to get bogged down in correcting unforeseen mistakes or consequences. As a result of these unanticipated results, the agency tries to regulate additional aspects of the enterprise to insure that the initial regulation "comes out right". Its involvement is thereby prolonged and deepened.

This occurred in Boston. Judge Garrity issued orders governing student assignments, for example, only to later discover that these guidelines had undesirable consequences for students participating in extra-curricular activities offered only at certain schools. The guidelines also imposed hardships on those who, due to family circumstances, wished to attend the school nearest their homes. As a result, Judge Garrity was forced to develop new court orders to govern the situations, orders which would grant exceptions, clarify or override earlier rules.

Garrity's response to what he perceived to be foot-dragging by the school department in carrying out his orders was another example of the tar-baby effect. He issued court order upon court order to correct perceived malfeasance. This continual pattern of interaction between the court and school administrators rein-

forced their mutual distrust. School committee members continually blamed Garrity for the administrative chaos in the school system. Garrity and his advisors were continually suspicious of Boston school officials. All the while the court was drawn even further into school administration; school administrators in turn had an ever greater portion of their jobs subject to legal rule.

Still another reason for the increased court involvement in the Boston schools was due to the fact that people perceived the federal district court as a place where any problem involving the schools could be solved. In April of 1976, for example, Hyde Park High School was the scene of serious racial tensions. The City-wide Parents Advisory Council (CPAC) called for the ouster of the Hyde Park headmaster in the hope that the situation at the school would be improved by that action. The CPAC also asked Judge Garrity to place the Boston School Department in receivership if the school department did not solve the Hyde Park problem. The CPAC took the problem to federal court, not to the school committee or school department where it should have been taken.

Implications for Schools

The characteristics of judicial administration mentioned here all have substantial impact on local school administration. Judge Garrity's continuing efforts to decide what he wanted to accomplish led him to become bogged down in issues of educational policy about which he knew little. The tar-baby character of the issue caused him to produce a complicated mass of court orders with only the most remote relationship to any constitutional command. The transformation of the federal court in Boston into a forum where school problems could be taken by concerned parents raised the possibility that Judge Garrity would be forced to assume the responsibility for solving additional problems of educational policy — matters about which he also knew little. By 1976, Judge Garrity's courtroom was serving as something of a school department in itself. His supervision of the Boston public schools lasted for almost a decade and only in 1983 are there signs, at long last, that the federal court will disengage from its oversight of the Boston schools.

For local school administrators the Boston experience contains at least three noteworthy lessons. First, educational reform cases may last a long time. Court oversight of the schools continues for many years and parent complaints are brought to the court even if they are only indirectly related to the cause of the original suit.

Second, the discretion of administrators is narrowed as the court promulgates rules or extends procedural protections to areas previously left to the judgement of school officials. The line between attaining the constitutionally required minimum standards of education and some higher, optimal level of educational excellence is difficult for everyone to discover. Courts, not surprisingly, rarely attempt to discern it.

Finally, the influence of the court often expands as reform cases unfold. Rhetoric invoking constitutional values is difficult to reject with appeals to practicality or common sense.

Court intervention in education has many beneficial consequences. It can place an issue on the public agenda, as it did in Boston, after years of neglect by public officials. Sometimes it improves the quality of education. But court action almost always complicates the jobs of local school officials. It can cause an outright clash between legalism and professionalism, and this rarely results in benefits to the students. ■

Two New Budget Blueprints

Powerful economic, cultural and political forces, intersecting with a decline in student enrollments, are currently creating a complex web of pressures on school districts. Fiscal stress is caused by mounting expenditures, inflationary costs and resource scarcities due to tax relief measures. Collective bargaining constrains personnel policies and significantly affects personnel costs. Legislative actions demand expanded services for underserved populations, while tax and expenditure limitations pressure districts to limit the level of educational services. Finally, certain tenure and seniority policies can have serious cost consequences for local school districts when enrollment decline reduces the demand for teachers.

Managing a school district and addressing these issues is a formidable task, and effective planning is imperative if decisionmakers are to accomplish this job successfully. Information is needed on the cost consequences of particular policies, such as school closings, or of demographic changes due to a dwindling student population. Local decisionmakers also need ways to examine alternative plans in order to determine the strategy which minimizes the negative impact of such changes on the quality and level of educational services. IFG has developed one tool and is currently working on another to address these needs; tools that will help local decisionmakers organize information in such a way as to determine the cost consequences and service implications of alternative budget strategies.

A Planning Model to Predict Teacher Costs

Teachers' salaries and benefits account for approximately 60-70 percent of a school district's total operating costs. The cost of teachers depends upon the level and composition of the teaching force in addition to their associated salaries. Understanding different teacher costs can provide insight into one of the major factors underlying the overall variation in the costs of educational services.

A recent IFG study developed an analytical model that predicts the composition of the teaching force with respect to years of experience and educational qualifications. It can be used by local school decisionmakers to project teacher costs under alternative employment and personnel policies. It can also examine the potential cost and service implications of certain changes in the pattern of student enrollments. The model uses data that are readily available in most school districts.

IFG tested the model on six years of data gathered from a suburban public school district in California. The teachers' salary scale is based on both experience and educational qualifications. Differences and similarities in the pattern of mobility through this salary scale were examined for teachers with different levels of experience and for teachers who were active as opposed to being on leave or sabbatical.

One of the interesting findings is that teachers who are on leave have a substantially lower probability of returning and continuing on through the salary scale than do teachers not on leave. Leaves of absence provide teachers with opportunities to obtain further training and to examine the feasibility of alternative career paths while maintaining the option to return to the district. This finding indicates that more liberal leave policies, especially for senior staff, may allow more flexibility in hiring for the school district. More liberal leave policies may

also reduce the salary burdens of the district's senior staff.

Decisionmakers could put such a model to several uses, especially in early planning for reductions in staff and budgets. The model can also simulate the effects of alternative personnel policies, including hiring practices, leave and sabbatical policies, pre-retirement programs, and other such policies on future costs of personnel. When staff reduction is needed, the model can determine whether reduction techniques other than terminations, such as natural attrition and early retirements, are likely to produce the required reduction in faculty and costs. If terminations are necessary, the long range effects of different reduction criteria can be estimated using the model. For example, the long range effects of the seniority criterion on the quality of teaching staff, teacher costs, and affirmative action can be simulated. The model could also be used to provide information needed for negotiation with teacher associations.

A Planning Model for School District Decisionmaking

Traditionally, school accounting and budgeting are organized by line-item categories related to administrative functions. There has been little effort to attach costs to instructional programs or to determine the needs for administrative and support services generated by these programs. Without such considerations, decisionmakers cannot understand the full cost and service implications related to the introduction or elimination of instructional programs.

IFG is currently adapting a model developed for state level finance and planning for use at the local school district level. It is designed to assist administrators in considering both the programmatic and cost consequences of alternative responses to instructional and fiscal circumstances. It will increase the capacity of local school districts to manage and allocate resources and specifically links budgetary and personnel decisions to program and curriculum policies. It will allow decisionmakers to observe the links between educational outcomes, program offerings, curriculum policy, the patterns of resources allocation, and the costs of services.

In essence, this model examines the cost of educational delivery systems. For example, the decisionmaker would define a delivery system for a third grade class in terms of the resources required: a primary school classroom of 20 students, one full time teacher and two aides. Next, the model could compute the cost of providing that classroom unit — the cost of space, the equipment to stock the room, supplies, clerical support for such tasks as attendance and records. Once the decisionmaker knows what that unit costs, he or she can decide how many such units are affordable. For instance, the cost of providing ten educational units of a given type may be very high. By changing the number of students per unit, or the number of teachers, the model can help the decisionmaker figure the other changes that are necessary in order for the unit to function, and provide the new cost associated with the new configuration. Similar delivery systems may be specified and cost estimated for different types of schools and programs and for district administrative and support services.

Copies of these studies can be obtained from IFG: "Cost Consequences of Changes in the Demographics of the Educational Workforce for Local Public School Districts", Jay G. Chambers and Joan O'Brien; 82-B10. "A Cost-Based Approach to the Funding of Educational Programs: An Application to Special Education", Jay G. Chambers and William T. Hartman; 81-A4. ■

DIAGNOSING DROPOUTS

Since the beginning of this century, a high school education has shifted from being the privilege of a minority to the standard practice for the majority. However, this dramatic rise in attendance has been offset more recently by an increasing dropout rate in many states. In California the attrition rate of students between the ninth and twelfth grades increased from 12-22 percent from 1967-1976. National census data reveal that the percentage of those generally believed to be the least likely to drop out — white male 16-17 year olds — increased from 6.3 percent in 1970 to 9.6 percent in 1978.

While majority white students have shown an increasing tendency to drop out of high school, minorities are still much more likely to leave high school before graduation. Among 18 to 21 year olds, one out of four black youths and more than one out of three Hispanic youths were high school dropouts in 1978, compared to one out of seven white youths.

By leaving school prematurely, dropouts relinquish one of the most important credentials for achieving success in the labor market: education. As a result of their limited training, dropouts experience higher unemployment rates and lower earnings than other workers. The unemployment rate of young high school dropouts in 1980 was almost twice that of high school graduates, while their annual income was 40 percent less. Furthermore, dropouts are more likely to require public assistance and to engage in crime than more educated citizens.

Dropouts report many reasons for leaving school. In a recent national survey of American youth, females, especially blacks, most often cite marriage and pregnancy as reasons for dropping out. Many dropouts, especially males, leave because they do not like school. Almost 40 percent of Hispanic males drop out for economic reasons — home responsibilities, good job offers, or financial difficulties. Similar reasons are often cited by black and white males. Other reasons for dropping out of high school include lack of ability, poor grades, and expulsions or suspensions.

Although the reasons students cite for leaving school provide some insight into the causes of this problem, a number of underlying factors may be influencing their decisions. For example, getting married or becoming pregnant may be the immediate reason many young women leave school, but the likelihood of becoming pregnant may be related to other factors, such as an unstable family life. The problem confronting school administrators is that these factors are interrelated, making it difficult to determine the most appropriate strategy to alleviate a dropout problem.

The reasons a student has for dropping out of school are varied and complex, and often not fully understood by the students themselves. Thus attempts to combat this problem should be linked to attempts to combat related problems as well.

Many states and localities have recognized this fact and have designed successful programs to keep potential dropouts in school and help past dropouts finish school. In St. Paul, Minnesota, for example, a system of in-school health care clinics is designed to reduce both teenage pregnancies and the dropout rate among

young women. Another successful program involves weekly school visits by social workers, backed up by a team of specially trained teachers in the school. Both of these programs stress continuing services to pregnant students and teenage mothers. This support is credited with keeping increasing numbers of these women in school.

Some communities have also designed programs to help students who have already left school. The New York City Board of Education runs six walk-in centers for dropouts providing individualized instruction in reading, writing, mathematics, and social studies, as well as various vocational mini-courses. In Everett, Washington, 75 dropouts are enrolled at Education Consultants, Inc., a private business supported in part with state funds. Both programs prepare students to return to school or to take high school equivalency examinations. Dropouts identify the personal and voluntary nature of these programs as their greatest assets.

While such programs may help students who have already left school to continue their education, the more difficult task facing educators and public officials is to keep more students from dropping out of school in the first place. The significant influence of family background indicates that the tendency to drop out begins early in a student's life. Attempts to combat the problem should therefore be initiated at an early age as well. Compensatory education programs, designed to overcome initial disadvantages associated with poor social origins, should be strengthened. Other interventions, such as better counseling inside and outside of the schools, might also help overcome the initial disadvantages stemming from lower social class background.

The dilemma facing educators is that many of the factors influencing dropout behavior lie outside of school. As a result, the problem cannot be considered in isolation, nor can the schools directly address many of the factors influencing dropouts. What is needed is a coordinated public effort aimed at the wide range of complex issues facing high school students today.■

The Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance (IFG) is a national research and development center funded principally by the National Institute of Education (NIE) under authority of section 405 of the General Education Provisions Act as amended by section 403 of the Education Amendments of 1976 (P.L. 94-482). The Institute is administered through the School of Education at Stanford University and is located in the Center for Educational Research at Stanford (CERAS).

IFG *Policy Notes* is a quarterly newsletter produced with support from the National Institute of Education, Department of Education. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the National Institute of Education or the Department of Education. Nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsements by the U.S. Government. Reprint rights are granted with proper credit.

Policy Notes welcomes your comments and suggestions. For additional information regarding IFG, copies of papers listed herein, or the announcements of past and future IFG publications, please contact:

Sandra Kirkpatrick
Assistant Director for Dissemination
IFG — CERAS Building
Stanford University
Stanford, Calif., 94305-1691
(415) 497-2754

POLICY NOTES

Catherine H. McGrath ..... Editor
Henry M. Levin ..... Consulting Editor
Esperanza Kelly ..... Support Staff

ADMINISTRATION OF IFG

Henry M. Levin ..... Director, IFG
Jay G. Chambers ..... Associate Director, IFG
Bernadine Murray ..... Assistant Director, Administration, IFG
Sandra L. Kirkpatrick ..... Assistant Director, Dissemination, IFG

STANFORD UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON EDUCATIONAL FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE
CERAS Building
Stanford, California 94305-1691
(415) 497-0957

IFG

IFG Policy Perspectives

Winter 1983

INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON EDUCATIONAL FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

RECLAIMING URBAN SCHOOLS

A Modest Proposal

By Henry M. Levin

Urban education has been in trouble for at least two decades. Low levels of student achievement, teacher strife, conflicts over the racial composition of schools, and financial stringencies are only a few of the manifestations of this malaise. It is ironic that this most troubled area of the American public schools was once the brightest star on the educational horizon.

Historically, the school systems of the largest American cities were studied and emulated by the rest of the educational system as exemplars of what public education should be. In terms of their human resources and funding, they were bastions of professional competence and sound educational practice. Educators looked to them for exciting ideas and innovation. Talented teachers and administrators sought positions in the large city schools, and the achievements of their students were legion. Some of the best secondary schools in the arts, sciences, technology, vocational education, and classics were to be found in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and other major cities. And, generation after generation of immigrants could look forward to educational opportunities in large cities that were undreamed of in their places of origin.

In the post World War II period, an inexorable process began which changed the large cities and their schools. First, the romance of the automobile reached its full fruition with the construction of major highway systems between cities and suburbs. The accessibility of the suburbs in combination with the quest of young and expanding families for a small home in outlying areas led to the construction of large, tract housing developments and their accompanying regional shopping centers. As the number of those able to afford housing in the suburbs increased, they were largely replaced in the cities by poor migrants — often minorities — from other parts of the nation. And, as business firms saw their labor forces moving to the suburbs, the establishment of new plants and expansion of employment followed the suburban trend.

By the late 1950s, most of the large cities were in trouble. Their tax bases were being eroded by the exodus of middle class taxpayers and business firms. The demand for public services was on the upswing as poorer citizens in the cities had greater needs for public assistance, social services, police, and low-cost housing. Although the 1960s was a period of rapid expansion of services for the poor by state and federal governments, these emollients could not keep pace with the needs of increasingly poor, minority, aging, infirm, unemployed, and ill-housed populations concentrated in cities whose own resources were diminishing at a faster rate than could be compensated for by federal and state coffers. Currently, poor economic conditions in conjunction with tax limitation movements and a new political conservatism have begun to reduce the earlier, inadequate commitments by states and federal governments to the large cities.

Some Challenges

These historical developments have led to at least four major challenges for policymakers, with important educational implications. First, there will be increasing proportions of poor, black, Hispanic and other minorities in the cities as the outflow of majority families continues. Those white and middle class families who remain will represent an aging population with low birthrates, while birthrates for minorities and the poor will remain high. Over time the city will become increasingly divided between a poor and minority population that will grow in numbers and require substantial public services, and an older population with its own service needs.

A predominantly middle class older population in the cities will tend to be more active politically than the poor and minority groups. The older populations will tend to expend their energies improving health care, housing and safety rather than promoting better schools. At the same time many white and minority middle class families will continue to send their children to private schools to avoid the problems of public schools. Accordingly, future political support at the local level for improving education can be considered problematic at best.

Second, for the foreseeable future, the public schools in the cities will be composed of a very high proportion of children drawn from racial minorities and low income families. Middle income families of all races will be more likely to choose private schools, and a higher proportion of the white population will be middle class than of the other races.

Third, problems of unemployment and a declining local tax base will persist. Though both may improve somewhat as the national economy improves, the unemployment rates will continue to be at precipitous levels relative to the national scene, as commercial activity continues to leave the cities. This situation implies a continuing future demand for a high level of other social services to meet the needs

Henry M. Levin is a professor in the School of Education at Stanford University and Director of the Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance (IFG).

EA 015 638 Part 2.

of low income families in the face of potentially diminishing public resources.

Fourth, there will be a decline in the combined commitments of the federal and state governments for meeting educational and other social needs in urban areas. Although there will be some shifting of responsibility between federal and state governments, the commitments of the 1960s and 1970s to integration, bilingual education, education for disadvantaged and handicapped youngsters will be reduced substantially. In part, this will reflect changes in political ideology, and in part it will reflect the limits on the public sector created by poor economic conditions in conjunction with expansion of defense spending and its drain on public resources.

These challenges suggest that within the cities, public education will not have as high a political priority as it once held when the middle class was deeply involved in the public schools. Moreover, the overall economic conditions that contribute to unemployment, crime, demands for public assistance, and a declining local tax base will continue to exist. Finally, it is not likely that financial assistance from federal and state levels will be forthcoming in the relative amounts of the last 15 years, unless a precipitous set of events similar to the urban riots and fires that swept the cities in the 1960s force a shift in spending priorities.

A Strategy

Any plan to rejuvenate the public schools of the large cities must satisfy the following criteria:

1. A new coalition must be established to provide political support for strong public schools in the cities.
2. New resources must be found to bolster what seems to be a declining resource base for public education.
3. Educational policy must be coordinated with economic development and racial policy to ensure that the schools are preparing the young for productive futures. Without such futures, it is unlikely that the young will see public education as important or crucial to their future development, and attempts to improve the schools will be self-defeating.

The following strategies address these criteria.

• Small Units

Although this assertion may seem to fly in the face of the venerable movement towards school consolidation and school closures, the organizational building blocks of a strong urban school system are smaller schools with school-site governance. Research on educational processes as well as analyses of school size and costs on the one hand, and student achievement on the other, have found that small schools are better than large ones. Such schools are more personalized, leading to feelings of greater self-worth among the participants and more personalized interactions and expectations. A more intimate atmosphere often means that accountability becomes a daily interpersonal process rather than a mechanical and impersonal one.

There is no educational argument for primary schools larger than about 300-350 students, and smaller schools can be viable down to about 150 students if they share some services with neighboring schools. Likewise, four year secondary schools can be as small as 300-400 students if they are able to cooperate through the use of some shared teachers and professionals in highly specialized areas. Indeed, one of the major attractions of private schools is their relatively intimate size in which the participants are known to each other and in which interpersonal accountability can be established through closer human expectations and relations. As a rule of thumb, any primary or secondary school is probably too large if the principal and teachers do not know most of the students, by name.

As a rule of thumb, any primary or secondary school is probably too large if the principal and teachers do not know most of the students, by name.

In this context, school closures should be viewed with caution. The anticipated cost savings of school closings are often exaggerated. Most of the cost of education is comprised of teacher and administrator salaries and benefits, categories that are usually unaffected or reduced only slightly by school closings. Further, schools are rarely leased at market prices or sold in an expeditious way after they are closed. At the same time the added costs of moving children from a local neighborhood are high in terms of both political alienation of their parents and the transportation expenses that have to be assumed.

Accordingly, small schools ought to be maintained, if at all possible. Large schools should be broken down into decentralized mini-schools with which individual teachers and students can identify. Under a mini-school approach, several distinct "schools" would operate in a particular building with considerable autonomy, but share the overall facilities and such specialized educational resources as provisions for handicapped and bilingual students. Instead of closing schools whose plants are too large for existing enrollments, excess space should be leased while maintaining school operations for the smaller student bodies. Every school should be viewed as a small educational community that caters to its young members who are known individually to each other and to school personnel.

• Governance and Accountability

In order to obtain the involvement and political support of neighborhoods as well as to increase community expectations with regard to the education of their young, there must be an effective way of incorporating community representation into the governance and operations of each school. Research on effective schools suggests that an important element is the successful interaction of parents, students, and professional educators in the educational process. Accordingly, each of the small units should create a governance mechanism composed of parents, community representatives, and teachers who will work with administrators to meet educational goals for the school. Such a governing body might also include students at the secondary level. A portion of school expenditures should be placed at the disposal of the local governing board in order to implement its concerns. Particular domains of responsibility would include any extraordinary personnel decisions, and certainly the choice of the school principal who would be hired on the basis of a multi-year (e.g. 5 year) contract and evaluated on the basis of performance.

In addition to the overall district criteria on such matters, school-site governing boards could also set "local" policy for educational accountability, information availability on school and student performance, and student behavior. These policies would be implemented by the professional staff of the school. Progress reports would be available for each child with a notation of strengths and weaknesses and the nature of the educational program that was designed to respond to individual areas of weakness. The emphasis would be on a deep community involvement for each school to overcome the depersonalization of education and to marshal higher expectations, support, and resources for school improvement.

• New Resources

While it appears that new financial re-

sources for schools will be difficult to obtain, the preoccupation with finances overlooks the plethora of human and material resources that have been underutilized by traditional approaches to education. Senior citizens represent a unique source of human talent for tutoring students and for providing assistance on special projects, field trips, language instruction, and so on. Often such persons languish in isolation with little challenge and involvement, and they feel very distant from the schools in both their outlook and political support. Not only will a systematic program for involving senior citizens in the schools increase the available resource base, but it will also increase that group's political support for education — a not inconsequential by-product.

Likewise, students can be more fully a part of the educational process by tutoring fellow students and helping with other tasks such as clerical and logistical duties. In Japan students spend a part of the day in cleaning and maintaining their schools, a collective activity that gives them a sense of ownership and pride in their local school. Further, research on peer teaching suggests that both cross-age tutoring and same-age tutoring enables the schools to improve instruction for students in need of extra assistance, while also raising the skills of the tutors. Young people need to feel that they are important in the educational process as active initiators of learning rather than just passive objects of that process. Such a process encourages students to assist each other. This approach is especially important in the role that nonhandicapped students might play in assisting handicapped ones, a process with important social and educational benefits for both groups of students.

Potential parental resources might be more available in smaller and more highly personalized schools that welcome participation and identification of parents with the needs of the school. Not only would parental participation increase the resource base of the schools, it would also raise the commitments and expectations of parents and their offspring with regard to the importance and legitimacy of the educational process.

Young people need to feel that they are important in the educational process.

Finally, it is important to draw upon local businesses and other community resources to provide various types of support for the schools. With respect to businesses, the emphasis can be on both material resources and jobs for students. Shortages of mathematics and science teachers and other specialists might be partially offset by a policy of firms lending the schools pertinent personnel on a part-time basis. Managerial and organizational advice for improving school operations might also be contributed by such entities as well as financial contributions and equipment. There presently exist tax incentives for such donations. Churches might provide needed facilities, and the museums and park areas could make enormously rich contributions to the education of students in the arts, sciences, and environment.

The overall aim is to draw in new resources in a spirit of commitment and enthusiasm so that the entire community identifies with its schools or mini-schools and sees their success as being important to the present and future of the community. The schools should be centers of community activity and sources of pride; the schools should be viewed as "our schools" in terms of both commitments to them and demands upon them.

• Integration With Other Policies

Housing, race policies, and job development are crucially related to the future of education. When families lack adequate shelter, it is difficult for them to provide an environment to promote learning. Race relations in the city at large set the stage for inter-racial cooperation or conflict in schools and other institutions. The adequacy of available job opportunities can be an important influence on motivating students to take their education seriously.

It is important that existing businesses view the schools as capable of producing graduates with the skills to meet employment demands. This can best be accomplished by maintenance of close contacts with firms in an attempt to understand employment and skill needs; consultation with those firms and collaboration with them in meeting these needs; agreements by firms to provide part-time and full-time jobs to students and graduates; and coordination of educational plans with the needs of the firms that might establish operations or expand if an appropriate labor force is available. The firms might lend consultants, instructors, and equipment to assist in job preparation or permit some instruction on their own premises to provide specific skill training to students for job development. Public policies that address housing needs, discrimination, jobs, and community health and development would also be coordinated with the new schooling approaches.

• Role of Central Administration

The emphasis on smaller and largely self-governing school units would suggest profound shifts in the role of the central administration. In fact, the central administration would still have an extremely important role in a number of major areas. First, it would be responsible for the overall financial administration of the schools, even if many of the spending decisions are made at the local level. Second, it would be largely responsible for the maintenance of accurate records on students and personnel as well as personnel administration. Third, it would be responsible for overall negotiations on salaries and working conditions with the various employee organizations. Fourth, it would be responsible for providing technical assistance to local schools on matters of governance, decisionmaking, training, curricula, and so on. Finally, it would be responsible for a city-wide program of testing and information whose results would be available to the constituents of each of the local schools and their governing boards. The overall role would be that of coordination and provision of support services, rather than that of a central decisionmaker.

The unions could protect the basic interests of their members . . . while contributing as a progressive force for improving the education at each school.

• Role of Teacher Organizations

The main impact of smaller schools with school-site governance for teacher organizations would be to shift their bargaining from a central level to a two-tier process of participation. On the one hand, salaries and basic working conditions would be determined through negotiations with the central administration on a centralized basis for the entire city. On the other hand, the fine details at the school level would be worked out through negotiations with the local governing boards of schools and the "elected" principal. That is, there are funding and salary issues that can only be resolved at the central level, but the particular details of work at any specific site should be negotiable at that site. On this basis, the unions could both protect the basic interests of their members with respect to salaries, employment, and working conditions, while contributing as a progressive force for improving the education at each school through

addressing the issues most pertinent at those sites.

Getting There

These are not trivial changes. They will require agreement and consensus on both principles and forms of implementation. This can only be accomplished through discussion and negotiation. One possibility is to establish a commission charged with formulating a plan for change. Such a commission must build on discussions with all of the legitimate interests in seeking a new approach for education. Although the general principles set out above should be useful for creating a structure for change, the specific details must certainly vary in each setting.

Perhaps the most important requirement for change will be the need for present political interest groups in the cities to make educational revitalization a crucial priority. This recognition must lead to fundamental change in the organization and governance of the schools themselves. If citizen groups, taxpayers, business groups, political parties, and educational organizations all commit themselves to school revitalization, the first steps of study, planning, political discussion and negotiations can be initiated. Changes require strong leadership, a commodity that is in short supply on the urban scene.

Most important, such a plan for revitalization must clearly address the need for fundamental changes rather than cosmetic alterations. There are strong indications that the patient is gravely ill and that radical surgery and treatment is needed. Many established groups in education will view radical surgery as unthinkable because of the apparent risk it implies for altering the present claims of their constituencies. But in response it is important to emphasize that students, parents, teachers, other school personnel, taxpayers, businesses, and the cities themselves are facing an increasingly moribund situation without hope of a "quick fix" or a magic rescue. Continuation along the present path promises further deterioration in which all of the participants will be certain losers. ■

Additional copies of this ***Policy Perspective*** *may be obtained by writing to IFG, School of Education, CERAS Building, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305-1691.*

Stanford University, School of Education, CERAS Building, Stanford, CA 94305-1691